



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215

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January 27, 2006

TO: Conservation Partners  
State Technical Committee

During fiscal year 2006, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado will utilize a Call for Proposal (CFP) process to offer up to one million dollars of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding targeted for the control of invasive plant species. The program will be offered in limited geographical areas for watershed scale projects that will significantly reduce the abundance and impacts of newly emerging noxious weed species and improve the surrounding plant communities.

Due to limited funding, only project areas identified by organizations or units of government that have an existing program or organized effort to address invasive plant species will be considered for funding. Since EQIP funding can only be utilized on private working lands through contracts with individual landowners, this funding **will not** be offered as a grant. Once the project area is selected, individual landowners or groups of landowners can apply for funding within the approved project areas.

Responses to the CFP will be accepted from organizations, units of government, or other groups with an ongoing weed management or invasive plant species initiative or program. To be considered for funding, proposals must follow the attached guidelines and be received in the NRCS State office at the address listed above by the close of business on March 24, 2006. The proposals will be evaluated and project areas selected by April 7, 2006.

Questions concerning the CFP may be referred to Dennis Alexander, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist at 720-544-2805, Cindy Lair, Executive Director with the Colorado State Conservation Board at 303-239-4111, or Eric Lane, State Weed Coordinator at 303-239-4182.

We have enclosed detailed guidance on the application process and the ranking criteria that will be utilized to select the project areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Allen Green", is written over a light blue circular background.

ALLEN GREEN  
State Conservationist

Enclosure

### Colorado Invasive Plant Program – 2006

In 2006, NRCS in Colorado is using a Call for Proposals format to identify priority watersheds. This program emphasizes watershed scale projects that significantly reduce the abundance and impacts of newly emerging noxious weed species and improve affected plant communities. Project proposals for weed species not identified in this Call for Proposals will not be considered. This is a new project initiated by NRCS, the Colorado Noxious Weed Management Program and the Colorado State Conservation Board.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Colorado Invasive Plant Program is a voluntary program for conservation-minded landowners who want to improve the productivity of their rangeland and riparian lands for agriculture and wildlife by reducing the impact of noxious weeds, primarily on private land. Through this initiative USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides up to 50 percent cost-share assistance to contain and control the spread of targeted noxious weeds and improve the quality of desirable plant communities.

NRCS will offer up to \$1,000,000 in fiscal year 2006 for cost share assistance to private landowners to implement integrated weed management plans that target selected invasive plant species. Payments will be made through EQIP contracts with individual landowners. Incentive payments will be offered for chemical, cultural, and mechanical control methods. To qualify, landowners must be located within approved watershed areas that demonstrate a cooperative effort to the control of invasive plants. Watershed areas that can provide matching cost share funding, technical assistance, and programs to also address invasive plant control on adjacent public lands will receive priority for funding.

All proposals **MUST** be reviewed and signed by the local NRCS District Conservationist, County Weed Manager and appropriate partnering agencies/entities before being submitted to the NRCS State Office for funding consideration.

***The process for 2006 will involve the following steps:***

1. If the local Conservation District is not sponsoring the proposal, the proposal sponsor shall contact the local NRCS office and inform them of proposal development intentions. Viable partnerships between NRCS, Conservation Districts and local governments are strongly encouraged.
2. The proposal will be developed addressing all eight elements listed below in as much detail as possible.
3. Once the proposal is completed, it should be reviewed and signed by the District Conservationist and the County Weed Manager.
4. **Five copies** of the proposal must be received in the NRCS State Office by close of business on March 24, 2006 at the following address:

Dennis Alexander,  
NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist  
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C  
Lakewood, CO 80215-5517

5. A proposal review committee will prioritize the proposals using the attached ranking form.
6. After the committee prioritizes the proposals into high and medium priority, they will rank the highest priority proposals first and recommend funding the proposals according to the ranking. If there is money left after funding high priority proposals, the medium priority proposals will be ranked and may be considered for funding.
7. The proposal sponsors will be notified of funding by April 7, 2006.
8. Once the projects are identified for funding, a signup period will be announced. Private landowners that are otherwise eligible for EQIP can apply for individual contracts to treat invasive plant populations. An integrated weed management plan and land rehabilitation plan must be developed for the treatment areas prior to treatment.

*Proposals that are received in the NRCS State office by close of business on March 24, 2006, will be screened using the following guidelines and eight elements:*

**Management Proposals** will focus on the management of one or more selected List A or List B State-designated noxious weeds that are established in Colorado.

**High Priority Proposals** must target two or more of the following priority species for management:

**List A:**

Meadow knapweed (*Centaurea pratensis*)  
Mediterranean sage (*Salvia aethiopis*)  
Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*)  
Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)  
Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)

**List B:**

Absinth wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*)  
Black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*)  
Chinese clematis (*Clematis orientalis*)  
Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)  
Oxeye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)  
Plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*)  
Salt cedar (*Tamarix spp.*)\*  
Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)  
Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*)

\*Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) control may also be funded through this program in areas infested with salt cedar proposed for management.

In addition to managing two or more of these selected species, high priority proposals must:

1. Identify and enhance/restore the appropriate habitat type associated with the treated acreage according to a conservation plan approved by the local conservation district;
2. Emphasize appropriate integrated weed management techniques that focus upon the elimination and eradication of outlying populations of the targeted noxious weed (those that are generally acknowledged to be outside the core infested areas of Colorado) before targeting more heavily infested areas of Colorado – see the statewide maps depicting the distribution and abundance of weed species at <http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/mapping/QuarterQuadSurvey.html>; and
3. Identify and address urgent threats (e.g., diminishing critical habitat for threatened and endangered species), habitat issues (e.g., limited habitat for rare or valued species of plants and wildlife), or other impacts (decreasing forage production, reduced recreational opportunities, compromised water quality) of the targeted species.

**Medium Priority Proposals** must also accomplish these same objectives but will target only one of the selected invasive plant species listed above.

**ALL PROPOSALS MUST ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING EIGHT ELEMENTS:**

The following information must be included within each application in order to rank it against competing proposals. Failure to address each of these elements will handicap a proposal. Do not hesitate to request assistance from the State Weed Coordinator or Conservation District program manager to ensure that you understand and address these elements in a satisfactory manner.

**Species:** Identify the specific noxious weed species that your project will address. Priority species for 2006 are noted above. Only proposals that included one or more of these invasive plant species will be evaluated.

**Location of Project Area:** Describe the area (geographically and ecologically) addressed by the proposal. Proposals that target noxious weeds from the prioritized List B identified above must identify whether the project area is located within an eradication/elimination or containment/suppression zone for that species. Please include appropriate maps of the proposed area. Contact the Colorado State Weed Coordinator or County Weed Manager(s) for additional information regarding the distribution of targeted noxious weed species. Also, see <http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/mapping/QuarterQuadSurvey.html> for maps depicting the statewide distribution of selected species, the management plans included in the Colorado Noxious Weed List (<http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/statutes/weedrules.pdf>), and the draft management plans for black henbane, diffuse knapweed, oxeye daisy, and yellow toadflax at <http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/Weedhome.html>.

**IPM Practices:** Projects should adopt weed management strategies that not only practice integrated weed management but also recognize relevant ecological factors that affect the efficient and cost-effective management of an area. Projects should include a landscape approach that considers watersheds, as well as wind, water, wildlife, and human vectors and attempt to manage the effects of these features. Applications must be explicit with regard to the use of integrated pest management techniques appropriate for the type of project proposed. Identify the management techniques (biological, chemical, cultural, mechanical) that will be applied. Provide

an estimate of the total project acres treated by each practice. Make sure that the selected techniques are appropriate to achieve the management objective (e.g., biological control is used in areas for suppression, not eradication).

**Project Management:** Explain how the project will be managed. Identify who will be coordinating actions, contacting partners and landowners, performing field work, etc. After completion of the project, what type of follow-up will occur? For example, please address how education materials will continue to be distributed or reinvasion of targeted species or other noxious weeds species will be prevented.

**Management of Adjacent Lands:** Since EQIP funds are only available to individual private landowners, will adjacent public lands be treated or enrolled in other noxious weed management programs? Are neighboring jurisdictions concerned and actively managing/searching for new invading species targeting by the proposal? Also, has the proposed watershed completed any watershed planning process that has bearing on noxious weed management in the area?

**Landowner Cooperation:** How many landowners do you anticipate will be involved in the project? Is there some form of commitment that participating landowners will continue to manage noxious weeds in a coordinated and effective fashion once funds have been exhausted? The proposal should clearly describe the desired outcome of project and the degree to which landowners have committed their participation to achieve this outcome.

**Project Budget and Timeline:** In as much detail as possible, identify the expected costs of the project. Itemize expected expenditures and be specific as to any cost-share assistance and partner contributions. Also, provide a detailed timeline that depicts the expected chronology of events leading to the completion of the project.

**Partnerships:** Identify and explain partnership commitments to the project. Projects located in counties with active noxious weed programs should involve the county weed manager. Be very specific as to the actual commitments of each contributing partner (i.e., hard cash, in-kind, leadership roles, etc). Is the commitment in writing or verbal? Priority will be given to projects with written partner commitments.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek and provide matching cash and in-kind resources. This funding opportunity seeks to leverage additional public and private resources toward local weed management objectives. Matching resources may include direct expenditure of applicant funds for necessary project costs, including contracted professional services, and/or in-kind staff support and services necessary to complete project tasks.

**Contacts:** Dennis Alexander, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, 720-544-2805  
Cindy Lair, State Conservation Board Program Manager, 303-239-4111  
Eric Lane, State Weed Coordinator, 303-239-4182  
County weed supervisors:  
<http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/Weeds/mapping/CountyWeedPrograms.html>  
Conservation Districts: <http://www.ag.state.co.us/CSD/ccdd/>

Once all proposals are prioritized by the selection committee into high and medium categories, each will be reviewed and scored by the committee using the following system. Each of the following items will be used to assess the quality of the proposal and generate an overall project score. The point value for each item may range from 1-20 points. The overall project scores of the proposals will be compared to determine funding allocation. Proposals with highest total score will be considered for funding first.

- 1. Species selection:** List A species will receive the highest point value. Populations of List B species managed in eradication zones will receive more points than populations managed in containment/suppression zones. The primary emphasis of funds used for management projects will be to eliminate outlying populations and stop the spread of targeted species.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Impact of project:** The expected contributions of the project towards the protection/restoration of important habitats or valued land-uses, tangible improvements in watershed-wide management of noxious weeds, or the successful halt of a species' continued spread will be evaluated. Tangible and measurable outcomes are preferred.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 3. Landowner participation and commitment:** The active participation of private landowners is an important component of any successful proposal. Project should be clear about how landowners will participate or benefit from the project, their expressed commitment to the project, and how project administrators will provide opportunities for their involvement.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Integrated weed management:** Project should be specific about the management techniques used to achieve specified management objectives. Techniques should be appropriate to the task. An integrated management approach and strategy has been clearly articulated and is appropriate to the project and project area.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Partnerships:** The number and type of partnerships is appropriate to the type, scope, and location of the project.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 6. Contributions:** Projects will be evaluated on the type and amount of matching and in-kind contributions from landowners and partners.

Points\_\_\_\_\_

- 7. Project organization:** Project has a clearly developed set of leaders and tasks, the budget is sufficiently detailed and appropriate to the project, and the timeline is appropriate.

Points\_\_\_\_\_